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TAGS: [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KISL](#) [KDEM](#) [EG](#)
SUBJECT: CHARGES REDUCED AGAINST MUSLIM BROTHERHOOD MEMBERS
FACING MILITARY TRIBUNAL

REF: A. CAIRO 2808
[1](#)B. CAIRO 3018

Sensitive but unclassified. Not for internet distribution.

[1](#)1. (SBU) In an unexpected December 15 development, the military court which is trying forty members of the Muslim Brotherhood (MB) reportedly dropped charges against the defendants of "participating in a terrorist organization" (which carries the death penalty) and money laundering. According to press reports, the sole charge remaining against the group of defendants is "membership in an illegal organization." (Note: According to Egyptian law, the MB is technically banned. End note). The MB's third-most senior official, Second Deputy Supreme Guide Khairat Al Shatir and MB member and businessman Hassan Malik reportedly are still charged with managing companies that finance the MB. The military tribunals have been ongoing since April 26, and only thirty-three of the MB defendants are in custody; the other seven are being tried in absentia. To date, the GOE has ignored four decisions by various civil courts that ruled against the use of the military tribunals, and ordered the release of the detainees (ref A).

[1](#)2. (SBU) The MB's website trumpeted that the dropping of the charges is "unprecedented in the history of Egyptian military justice," and indeed, legal experts we contacted could not recall a similar circumstance in Egypt's long experience with military tribunals. MB sources were quoted in the international and local media as stating that, "The dropping of the word 'terrorism' augurs well for a more lenient verdict than we could have expected." MB sources are also quoted as anticipating that closing statements in the trial will be delivered shortly. The military tribunal is currently adjourned for the Eid al Adha holiday, and is due to recommence on December 23.
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